



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 1966

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/01/1966

*This page was updated on 23 Nov 2012 to include the disclaimer below. No other content in this article was affected.*

### **DISCLAIMER:**

*Users are warned that historic issues of this publication may contain language or views which, reflecting the authors' attitudes or that of the period in which the item was written, may be considered to be inappropriate or offensive today.*

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Prepared by Mr. R. D. Piesse, B.A., LL. B. (Melb.), Director of Travel Development, Australian National Travel Association.

This article outlines the history and growth of travel and the structure of tourist organisations in Australia. It presents summaries of available statistics of overseas and internal travel by various means, provides some indications of tourist spending patterns and accommodation, and refers to research, training and other matters related to tourism. A selected bibliography at the end of the article provides references to articles, reports, etc. on, or relating to, tourism in Australia.

## INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism, whether domestic or international, are rapidly growing activities in Australia as well as in many overseas countries. The essential part of **travel** is transportation, but **tourism** comprehends, in addition, accommodation and the other facilities and attractions provided as the result of such travel, i.e. it relates to the activities of **tourists**.

The travel industry may be regarded as a service industry, as 'that part of the national economy which caters for the traveller who is visiting places outside the locality where he resides or works. It is a heterogeneous group, embracing a large variety of trades and industries which have the supplying of travellers' needs as their common function'

Because of the difficulty of isolating the services provided for travellers and of relating them to travel, it is only recently (at least in Australia) that attempts have been made to consider travel and tourism as a whole. Lack of appropriate statistics, the complexity of the economic transactions which need to be considered, and tardy recognition of the growing importance of this field are reflected in the meagre literature available

## Definitions

The absence of common definitions in the field of international tourism has been a matter of concern to national and international organisations for many years, particularly to those engaged in research work involving comparative studies. However, international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, the Statistical Commission of the United Nations and the International Union of Official Travel Organisations are now working towards the adoption of standard terms. The first United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in

Rome in August-September 1963, suggested that, for statistical purposes, the term 'visitor' should apply to any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited. This definition would cover **tourists**, i.e. temporary visitors, staying at least twenty-four hours in the country visited, the purpose of whose journey can be classified as relating to leisure (i.e. recreation, on holiday, or for reasons associated with health, study, religion, or sport), for business or for family reasons, on a mission, or for a meeting; and **excursionists**, i.e. temporary visitors staying less than twenty-four hours in the country visited (including travellers on cruises). It was further suggested that statistics should not include travellers who, in the legal sense, do not enter the country (air travellers who do not leave an airport's transit area and similar cases). The Statistical Commission of the United Nations, at its 1965 session, did not accept this definition for recommendation to member countries and suggested that further studies be made. While the Rome definitions may not be satisfactory for international statistical purposes, they serve to indicate broadly the scope of such terms as visitor', 'tourist', and 'excursionist'.

For the purposes of this article a **domestic tourist** is similarly defined as any person journeying in Australia and absent from his usual place of residence for twenty-four hours or longer; a distinction is made between interstate tourists (staying at least twenty-four hours in another State) and intrastate tourists. This definition of 'tourist' and 'visitor' is wider than the common interpretation of 'tourist' as a person travelling for pleasure or recreation.

The phrase '**the tourist industry**' is commonly used in Australia to describe the activities of all establishments which provide goods and services to the person travelling away from home.

The term **visitor plant**, defined as the entire range of tangible and intangible factors which attract or cater for tourists, is used especially in studies of travel development and promotion. While the term is useful to indicate the wide variety of facilities (transport, accommodation, restaurants, shops), attractions (scenic, recreational, historic, cultural), and such intangible factors as climate, organised programs to enable people to meet people, business opportunities and the like, which all affect the visitor, the concept which this term expresses is not measurable and is thus of limited use in practical studies.

The term **destination area** means a local with certain characteristics sufficient in themselves to attract travel.

## **History of travel and tourism in Australia**

From colonial days the idea of travel has been more natural to Australians than to people long established at one place. Immigrants, having once broken away from their homes, were prone to continue their search for wealth or security for a while, or, having settled down, to return to the old countries to visit their kin and refresh old memories. The opening of new lands, the establishment of industries and towns and the consequent dispersal of people over Australia created a habit of mobility and enterprise which encouraged Australians to face the hardships of early travel by coach, on horseback or by ship. Even so, the slow and uncomfortable modes of travel and the vast distances separating Australian towns tended to restrict travel to essential journeys for purposes of trade, to pursue an occupation or to settle. This changed somewhat with the advent of rail travel.

The initial emphasis in tourism for purposes of pleasure was strongest on travel to resorts near the main population centres. These included the Blue Mountains in New South Wales and the hill and coast resorts close to Melbourne and other major cities. The existing railway services radiating from those cities, together with the 'feeder' horse-drawn, and later motor, coach transport connecting with the railways, rendered the State Government railway tourist bureaux the main means for selling intrastate, and even some interstate, travel.

After the 1914-18 War in the 1920's, and again after the easing of the effects of the depression of the 1930's, travel for all purposes increased steadily. It continued to be mainly by rail, but also by sea, although the family motor car began in the 1930's to participate in the shorter intrastate traffic. A considerable fleet of passenger ships provided frequent and popular services linking most ports between Fremantle and Cairns. Other services linked Sydney and Melbourne with Tasmanian ports. The winter cruise of those days to Queensland ports could be regarded as the equivalent of today's drive or flight north for a winter holiday at the Gold Coast or a Barrier Reef Island, or today's shorter South Pacific cruises. The first cruises from Australia to New Zealand were organised in the summer of 1934-35, and Australians were travelling to Britain for as low as \$78, tourist class, in the years immediately preceding the 1939-45 War.

In the period following the 1939-45 War the advent of new and improved methods of transportation, combined with rising standards of living and the energetic publicising of foreign destinations, developed international travel into a mass-movement. New ocean liners shortened travelling time considerably, and travel by car and bus increased in many countries. Most of all, air travel became widely available, faster, safer, and cheaper. The beginning of the jet age in 1960, with larger aeroplanes carrying more than 100 passengers at speeds approximating 600 miles per hour, diminished the world by half in terms of time. Rising standards of living in the post-war period led to greater expenditure on tourism, thus making it more important to the national economy.

Australia has shared in this world-wide expansion of travel, particularly in respect of its domestic tourism. Because of the marked increase in incomes and private car ownership among large sections of the population, greater leisure time, three weeks paid annual holidays (introduced first in New South Wales in 1958) and the introduction of long-service leave, thousands of Australians now travel by road into almost every part of the Commonwealth. This has led to investment in the development of new and improved facilities, especially accommodation, of new resorts at dispersed points around Australia, and to modifications in organisation and methods of tourist administration, development and promotion. These activities in turn have had an important influence on matters such as the improvement of highways and the opening up of national parks and foreshores. A recent consequence is the first detailed study and survey of the entire Australian tourist industry, its development and its future potential.

### **Government interest in tourism and development of state tourist bureaux**

Under the Constitution of the Commonwealth the Commonwealth has no direct powers to regulate travel and tourism, except in so far as matters related to freedom of trade and intercourse between States, the publicising of Australia abroad and promotion of visitor traffic as an external trade activity, and the administration, development and promotion of travel and tourism to and within the Territories of Australia may be involved. Tourism within Australia thus falls into the residual powers of the State Governments. All States have for many years exercised their rights in respect of domestic travel and tourism, and some at times have extended their activities to promotion abroad.

The operation of travel and tourist bureaux and departments by the States, following the pattern set by New Zealand, evolved from the State railways' booking offices. Because of the emphasis at that stage on railways as the principal means of travel, the provision of rail booking facilities was, in fact, the primary purpose of these bureaux. New South Wales (1906), Victoria, South Australia, and then Tasmania (1915) entered the field early. In 1908 Victoria set up a Government Tourist Bureau which took over the functions of the Victorian Railways Central Booking and Enquiry Section established in 1895. This in turn had its origin in 1888 in the Railways Information Centre created for the International Melbourne Exhibition of that year. In opening the new Government Tourist Bureau in Adelaide in 1908 the then Treasurer of South Australia said that he expected that the development of a tourist traffic would add considerably to the coaching receipts of the railways. Government Tourist Bureaux were established by Western Australia in

1921 and Queensland in 1926.

Government support for, and participation in, the development of tourism grew rapidly in the middle and late 1950's in Victoria and Queensland and the early 1960's in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Along with the efforts of the domestic airlines and coach tour operators, it began to bring appreciably greater benefits to the tourist industries of these States and the Northern Territory.

Although Australian residents traditionally have been travellers to the United Kingdom and Europe, it was only in the late 1920's that the impetus first arose towards attracting international travellers to Australia and the Commonwealth Government's interest was aroused, largely because of the repeated representations by Australians returning to their homeland and through the vision of a group of business leaders. The promotion of travel to Australia was seen as a means of stimulating development, migration and, by virtue of the currency brought in by visitors, of increasing overseas earnings. The Chairman of Commissioners of the Victorian Railways, Mr. (later Sir) Harold Clapp who had first-hand knowledge of methods used by various United States railroads to promote travel to resort attractions. initiated similar travel promotion techniques for the Victorian Railways and also urged the development of a national policy for travel promotion.

In consequence of a recommendation by the Development and Migration Commission, the Australian National Travel Association was inaugurated by the Commonwealth Government in 1929 as a national, non-profit organisation under the **Companies Act 1928** of Victoria. The Commonwealth Government authorised an annual contribution of \$4,000 for five years to ANTA, whose initial annual budget was \$35,000. By 1930 Australian publicity and travel pro-motion offices were established in London and San Francisco. Australia became the first country to establish a tourist promotion office on the west coast of the United States. A few years later Australia established a similar 'first' for the Asian continent when ANTA opened an office in Bombay. Later it opened an office in New Zealand. During its first three-and-a-half years of operation the Association raised \$122,000. By the outbreak of the 1939-45 War its budget was \$106,000, largely because of a special Commonwealth grant of \$42,000 for the San Francisco Exposition.

---

This page last updated 23 November 2012

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence